Visiting Committee Member Training
THANK YOU

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As you think about your own school and its visits from colleagues representing the Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC, what are the issues related to being a visiting committee member that either made the most impact on your school (positive or negative) and what are your concerns about enhancing/overcoming these for the school you are visiting
Quality School Framework

- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment
- Family & Community
- Equity
- Teachers
- Leaders
- Professional Learning
- Resource Alignment
- Culture & Climate
- Students Learning & Thriving
ACS WASC

The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
ACS WASC

• Private, nonprofit
• Serves California, Hawaii, Pacific Islands, and worldwide (especially Asia)
• Extends services to over 4,600 pre-K to 12 schools
• Partners with 18 associations in joint accreditation partnerships
• Commission of 32 members from partner associations
ACS WASC accredits K-12 schools and not-for-profit, non-degree granting postsecondary institutions.
ACS WASC Accreditation Cycle

Accreditation Cycle of Quality

Follow Up

Focus on Learning

Self-Study

Visit

Plan

Assess

Implement

Reassess
How well are our students achieving?

Is the school doing everything possible to support high achievement of all its students?
Where is the school now? Where’s it going? Does it have a good roadmap?
Visiting Committee Member Checklist

Previsit Preparation

1. Receive the first letter from Visiting Committee chairperson that addresses:
   a. Requests for preferred areas of coverage during the visit
   b. Training session schedule reminder
   c. The review of accreditation materials

2. Attend WASC member training.

3. Study the school description, the *Focus on Learning* manual, and the reference cards
   Sections of *Focus on Learning* to emphasize: The Big Picture; The Self-Study;
   Background Information; The Self-Study; The Visit; The Follow-up; The Tools:
   Criteria/Suggested Evidence; Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (Schoolwide
   Learner Outcomes); Gathering Evidence.

4. Become aware of the parameters of the self-study followed by the school:
   - the involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study
   - the clarification of the school’s purpose and expected schoolwide learning results
     (schoolwide learner outcomes)
   - the assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with
     respect to the criteria
   - the development of a schoolwide action plan and integrated subject area/support
     program that addresses identified growth needs
   - the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the
     accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan
Outcomes of Self-Study

Involvement and Collaboration

Clarification and Measurement of Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

Data Analysis

Assessment of entire school program and its impact on student learning

Alignment of long-range action plan to school’s areas need; implement and monitor plan
The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
ACS WASC Self-Study

- Preface
- Chapter I Data
- Chapter II Progress
- Chapter III Conclusions

Chapter IV Organization
Chapter IV Curriculum Instruction Assessment
Chapter IV Support
Chapter IV Resources
Chapter V Action Plan
Appendices
School Organization

Home Groups

Leadership Team

Profile Team

Focus Groups
Data and School Background

Chapter I: Profile
Data

Demographic

Outcome

Process/Perception
Chapter II: Progress Report

1. Significant developments

2. Schoolwide critical areas for follow-up (last full visit and any mid-cycle or special visit)

3. Ongoing follow-up processes

4. Progress, evidence, impact on student learning for Action Plan sections/goals showing integration of schoolwide key issues

5. Critical areas for follow-up not currently in Action Plan
Chapter III: Profile/Progress Summary

Implications of data and progress with respect to student performance

Two to three critical learner needs based on data, noting correlated schoolwide learner outcomes

Important questions that have been raised by the analysis of the student data about the critical learner needs (Used by home and focus groups)
Chapter IV: Criteria

Organization

Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment

Support

Resources
Analysis of Student Data & Achievement and Assessment of Program Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria/Indicators Findings</th>
<th>Supporting Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Addressed identified Critical Learner Needs and related Schoolwide Learner Outcomes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One Plan
The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
Preparing for the Visit

Reference Card 1, Stage I B or VC Member Checklist #5

Review criteria, indicators, and appropriate curricular references.

What are the major concepts of the criteria and indicators? What critical data/information should be reviewed?
Sample Indicator & Prompt

C2. Instruction Criterion:

All teachers use a variety of strategies and resources, including technology and experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom that actively engage students, emphasize higher order thinking skills, and help them succeed at high levels.

Current Knowledge

**Indicator:** Teachers are current in the instructional content taught and research-based instructional methodology, including the integrated use of multimedia and technology.

**Prompt:** Provide a range of examples that demonstrate teachers are current in the instructional content taught and research-based instructional methodology.
How Students Learn:

Examples of areas to analyze

Degree to which various learning approaches are addressed through the instructional approaches

Extent to which teachers facilitate the learning

Student use of resources for learning beyond the textbook, e.g., technology

Student portfolios, performances, projects, discussions, collaborative activities

Perceptions of students about the learning experiences.
D2. Assessment and Accountability

Teachers employ a variety of appropriate formative and summative assessment strategies to evaluate student learning. Students and teachers use these findings to modify the learning/teaching practices to improve student learning.

Indicators with Prompts

Appropriate Assessment Strategies

**Indicator:** Teachers use appropriate formative and summative strategies to measure student progress toward acquiring understanding of a specific body of knowledge or skills, such as critical thinking and communication skills; examples of assessment strategies include essays, portfolios, individual or group projects, tests, etc.

**Prompt:** To what extent do teachers use appropriate assessment strategies to measure student progress toward acquiring a specific body of knowledge or skills based? Evaluate the selection of and the use of proctors, the security systems for test documents, and the means to maintain the integrity of the assessments.
ACS WASC Visiting Committee Report

Preface

Chapter I
Data

Chapter II
Progress

Chapter III
Process

Chapter IV
Organization

Chapter IV
Curriculum
Instruction
Assessment

Chapter IV
Support

Chapter IV
Resources

Chapter V
Action Plan
Your Prewriting Responsibilities

Use Previsit Worksheet

Comments/questions on all chapters

Chapter IV: Criteria Category Assignments
Develop your prewriting notes:

Narrative
Supporting Evidence
Ideas for clarification
Assessing impact
Strengths
Growth Areas
Questions
Read the entire report
Mark it up - Annotate
Look for alignment

Complete previsit worksheet
Comments - Questions

Complete your assignments
Notations

Make notes in the margins of the SS

+ or S  =  strength
- or G  =  growth area
? or Q  =  question to ask during visit
/ or C  =  check for evidence

Variations are possible

SC or +/-  =  possible strength
GC or +/-  =  possible growth area
School’s Self-Study

At [school] we have created a four to six week professional development cycle that includes: learning a schoolwide strategy, practicing with teachers, practicing in class, being observed by a peer, and analyzing the student work in SWA. This cycle has benefitted our teachers, who are mainly new to the profession. They have developed in their instructional skill exponentially, rather than gradually over time.
Peer observation has given our teachers opportunities to both observe their peers using the school-wide strategies, but also to observe their own students in different academic classes and settings. This has proven to be invaluable to our grade level discussions and department meetings particularly as we look to improve writing. Teachers can see what other teachers do to engage students and to challenge them, which fosters tremendous collaboration among our professionals. Cycles have included: Rituals and Routines, Cornell Notes, 7 Habits, Accountable Talk, Frontloading Vocabulary, and a cycle of writing instruction is forthcoming.
Big Questions

Do the findings respond to what is being asked in the criteria?

Does the evidence support the findings?

Strengths? Prioritized growth areas?

What insight has the school gained about student learning, the critical learner needs, and the schoolwide learner outcomes?
During professional development sessions led by teachers, staff has studied a variety of strategies to engage and challenge students. These have been supported by peer and administrative observations and the report states that teachers’ improvement “has been exponential.” This same model will be used as they move forward to improve writing.
Evidence: Self-Study

Possible Strength:
Leadership and staff - professional development program itself – staff and data driven, research-based – build internal expertise to further student growth

Possible Growth Area:
Leadership and staff – Continue and expand professional development program – writing
Over the past three years, teachers have participated in professional development sessions led by teachers. They have learned and practiced a variety of strategies to engage and challenge students. Using both peer and administrative observations as checks, the Visiting Committee confirmed that a majority of staff regularly use two to five different strategies during each class period to more actively engage students.
Writing, speaking, questioning, and responding strategies are all incorporated. Teachers openly speak with one another about their own growth and continuing areas of weakness. Students are clear in expressing that “things are different all the time” and yet “all the teachers do sort of the same things. That makes it easier for me.” This excellent internal model will be used as staff moves more directly to improve writing.
C. Instruction

**Strength:** School leadership and staff’s close working relationship and respect that have helped produce an inexpensive, viable, and highly effective professional development program designed to support high quality student learning.

**Growth Area:** Working with district leaders, School leadership and staff expand their strong professional development program to include writing strategies, assignments, and assessment tools to support high quality academic writing for all students.

**Evidence:** Self-Study Report, classroom and professional development observations, conversations with students and teachers.
Layers of a Criteria Response

- General
- Individual Groups of Students
- Different Programs and/or Departments
- Critical Learner Needs
Prewriting Practice

1. Reflect on the school’s critical learner needs and implications of the profile data.

2. Review criterion, indicators, and suggested evidence.

3. Read sample excerpts of focus group summary.

4. Compare self-study findings to the criterion/indicators and critical learner needs.
5. Write notes/questions (reference: previsit worksheet).

6. Practice writing a portion of an analytical summary of what currently exists and its impact on student learning (suggested length for practice: one-two paragraphs).

7. Include sample strengths, key issues and evidence (Note evidence that supports your comments or what you need to learn about during the visit.).

8. What’s the supporting evidence?
To the chair on time!
The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
Schedule

Sunday-Wednesday (usually)
VC Sunday Meeting

What have we learned from our previsit preparation about this school’s self-study and student learning?

What strengths and growth areas emerging from the review of the self-study.

What types of evidence need to be our focus?
How can we focus our review and analysis of evidence through

- Examining student work and other information
- Observing students and other aspects of the program
- Interviewing students and other

What are the primary areas of interest to discuss with school personnel at our initial meeting?
Meetings

VC and Leadership Team

VC and Focus Groups

VC and Other Groups
Observations

Who
When
Where
How

Know what you need to find out!
Interviews

Your assigned areas of study
Key issues
Plan
Documents

Student work
Handbooks
Curriculum documents
Recruiting brochures
School and District website
Powerful Questions

Action plan
All students
Critical learner needs
Criteria
Learner outcomes
Academic standards
Evidence analyzed
Powerful Questions

Understanding and use of data
Modifying learning and teaching
Feedback to students
Coaching colleagues in new strategies
Intended impact on student learning
Follow-up process
Powerful Strategies

Open ended
Presume they are doing it
Follow-up questions
Wait time
Sample Discussion Starters...

Help us understand...

Please clarify...?

We recognize that...

We understand from the self-study that...however...

What led to this conclusion?

Is this characteristic of ...?

Which factors contributed to these results?

What elements of the student/community profile are related to...?
Sample Questions

What have you learned?

What insights have you had since you prepared the summary?

How might this impact your identified critical learner needs?

Talk about evidence that led to the conclusions made.

What have you learned about student learning and success?

What can you as a school do to improve learning for each and every student?
How can we increase our understanding of the school’s self-study findings and student learning through the initial dialogue with school leaders?
Questions for Initial VC Meeting

Based on your reading of the sample self-study excerpt

Develop 2–3 questions for the initial leadership meeting as a table group

Share with another group and critique

Reverse roles

Debrief
Questions for Focus Groups

Think about your assigned areas
Write a question or two
Share with a partner or two
Report to the group for discussion
Meeting Preparation

- Room arrangement
- Timekeeper
- Ensure clear agenda

VC Team consensus on important questions
One Plan

Adequacy
Action steps
Understandable
Feasible

Commitment
Support
Barriers
Follow-up process
Through implementing the action plan, what will be different for students as global citizens?

One year from now?
Two years from now?
Three years from now?
Visiting Committee Synthesis Meetings

What should the VC include at these daily meetings based on the key concepts of the criteria, the Self-Study, and findings during the visit?

How do you ensure the report reflects accurate school findings and a “Whole Visiting Committee” view?

Rewriting and Revising
Critical Areas for Follow-Up

Those areas that **support** areas already identified in the action plan sections

Those areas that **strengthen** areas already identified in the action plan sections

Potential **additional areas** not addressed by school.
Critical Areas for Follow-Up

Who
What (diagnostic not prescriptive)
Why
Sample Critical Area for Follow-up

Who
The leadership, instructional staff, and other stakeholders increase the use of the results from analyzing student achievement data in modifying instruction, particularly in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and critical thinking skills to improve student learning.

What

Why
Improve these Samples

The development of a systematic review process to assess the impact of education programs and materials on student learning.

The school needs to explore professional development that meets the instructional needs of the school.

Continue to move forward with curricular integration among the various disciplines in preparation for the Common Core State Standards.
Alignment, Alignment, Alignment

Important learning needs of the students
Correlation of major areas for follow-up to key issues
Rationale for accreditation status recommendation
Doc & Just-ratings,
comments, &
VC report findings
Accreditation Status Factors:
VC Recommendation and Commission Action
Accreditation Status

Six-Year Accreditation Status

Progress report at mid-cycle

Progress report and one-day visit at mid-cycle

Progress report and two-day visit at mid-cycle

One-or-Two-Year Probationary Status with an in-depth progress report and a two-day visit

Accreditation Status Withheld
Short-short-form of the analytical summary of self-study looking at “to what extent” the school meets the criteria plus rationale for status
Wednesday

VC and Leadership Team meeting
Whole school presentation
On the visit

**Do**

Be a team player
Validate & extend, not evaluate
Support, not judge
Celebrate successes
Prepare and plan
Listen
Focus on important issues
Work for consensus
Work toward the action plan
Confidentiality

**Don’t**

Try to solve their problems; diagnostic not prescriptive
Argue over words; do ensure ideas are captured and clear
Focus on small things
Talk about your school
Over eat or over sleep
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